THE

Western Conference News Letter

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The fifty-sixth annual session of the Western Conference showed that the spirit of the fathers still lives in their spiritual children. All of the forward looking that they manifested was to be seen in this gathering, as was also the larger reverence which they ever exhibited. It is impossible for the report of this meeting to adequately convey its spirit, but in so far as it can be done this number of the NEWS LETTER will convey the spirit of the gathering to its readers.

It seems impossible for our Eastern friends to understand that the Western Conference is absolutely independent. An editorial in *The Unitarian* commenting upon the action of our directors requesting the nomination of their secretary for director of the A. U. A., says that the Western Conference is a department of the A. U. A. Nothing could be more misleading. There is no connection between the two bodies save that of co-operation through mutual interests. The action of our directors was to establish some point of contact. It is hoped by all interested in our cause that eventually some way will be discovered whereby the present wastefulness of existing methods may give way to united efforts that may prove more effective. It was not to emphasize the wishes of a section, but to establish a closer relation, that the action was taken.

The summer school has become a place of refreshment to the preacher and teacher exhausted of material and strength by a year of giving out their best. It combines inspiration, information and recreation. Each year Harvard offers a course to preachers. This year the session, July 1-18, promises to be of especial interest. The subject is "The Relation of Christianity to Other Religions." Men well qualified to speak handle the various phases of the subject. At Meadville a similar session is to be held, July 1-24, save that the special subject is to be Sunday School work. Specialists in all of the branches into which modern pedagogy has divided itself are to give instruction. The growing sense of inadequacy in Sunday School work will no doubt make many Sunday School teachers and ministers go to this school. This gathering is of especial interest to our Western workers, because it is not very far away and the expenses are very low. Meadville is a very beautiful place, and the school furnishes every facility for comfortable entertainment.

WESTERN UNITARIAN CONFERENCE.

The fifty-sixth annual meeting of the Western Unitarian Conference was held in Chicago, at the Church of the Messiah, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, May 18, 19, 20 and 21.

The proceedings began with a service on Monday evening at which was delivered the Conference sermon, "A Defense of Heresy," by Rev. George A. Thayer of Cincinnati. There followed upon Tuesday the meetings of the Alliance, which will be duly reported by another.

On Tuesday evening the ministers dined together at the Lexington Hotel. The speaker was Rev. Charles Ferguson of Kansas City, and the subject "A Definition of Unitarianism Framed to Show Its Identity With Essential Americanism." The pre-eminent characteristic of American life, according to the speaker, is creativeness. The western man is a world-smith, dealing with plastic materials. Another characteristic, following as a sort of corollary, is the idea of good fellowship and fraternity. The worldwide industrial system of the present age has instituted a new conception of the worth and rights of the individual. The old worship of authority, however, and the superstition of most men, still prevent the rightful share in the results of labor from going to the men with the tools, while they permit the lion's share to go to the promoters and financiers. With regard to both these characteristics of Americanism, Unitarianism has a message to bring which accords with the need of the time. First, Unitarianism teaches the divinity of man, that is the creativeness, not of one man as in orthodoxy, but of all. And, secondly, Unitarianism teaches the authority of the spirit, which demands and asssures justice and brotherhood. Discussion followed, participated in by Messrs. Spence, Thayer, Rihbany, McCarthy and Boynton, and Mrs. Woolley.

The evening meeting at the church was devoted to the exposition of three phases of "The Religion for Today." Rev. William Forkell of Aurora, speaking of this religion as "Free as opposed to authority, held that a progressive faith refuses to be anchored to creeds. In a progressive faith, there is always present the unknown, and the changing needs of succeeding ages demand an assertion in new form of the essential faith of humanity. Rev. E. Stanton Hodgin of Minneapolis, speaking of "The Inversion of Humanity and Deity," pointed out the effect of the inductive method upon the thought of the relationship of man to God and man to man. The new religious thought denies the possibility of the relationship of master and servant in the fields of religion and politics alike. The fact that in nature there is no heirarchy of forces, but that everything is mutual and co-operative, must be realized by races, individuals, and corporations. Misery is due to the effort to assert a false mastery. Rev. W. L. Beers of Youngstown, speaking on "The Call of a Divine Universe," said that the response in the heart of man is determined by the nature of his conception of the universe. Unity and co-operation are the direct results of the faith of man in a universe divinely conceived and administered.

On Wednesday morning a formal welcome on behalf of the Church of the Messiah was extended by the minister, Rev. W. H. Pulsford. The address of Hon. Morton D. Hull, president of the Conference, followed. Rev. W. M. Backus, secretary, and Mr. H. W. Brough, treasurer, presented reports; following which the secretaries of the various state conferences reported progress. There followed an address on "Missionary Efficiency," by Rev. Samuel A. Eliot, D. D., a powerful appeal for zeal, organization and loyalty. The injection of business at this point cut short discussion of the address beyond the comments of Rev. Albert R. Vail, of Champaign.

On Wednesday afternoon Rev. George R. Dodson, of St. Louis, presented a paper on "Pragmatism." Following is a brief synopsis prepared by Dr. Dodson: "Pragmatism as a method applies the test of consequences. It asks about a theory: 'What difference does it make?' If it makes no difference, then it has no meaning, and the question of its truth does not have to be raised. But there is an ambiguity here. For there are two cases, one in which the consequences come whether the proposition be believed or not, the other in which the consequences come only when the proposition is believed. When this distinction is made the method is seen to be valueless. For if only those propositions are to be regarded meaningful whose results come regardless of what we may think about them, then nothing can pass this test but such scientific laws as those through which we predict eclipses. Most doctrines of philosophy and religion, tried by this test, seem idle, since they make no difference when regarded in a purely speculative way. On the other hand, all these questions are full of meaning and abound in consequences for those who believe in and live by them. Consequences of a proposition and consequences of belief in a proposition are two different things, but Professor James has not kept them apart.

"In discussing the nature of truth, Professor James says that truth is something that happens to an idea, the process of its verification. But he also speaks of it as verifiability—that is, the condition which makes verification possible. But here again is an ambiguity, for verifiability is not the same as verification. Pragmatism can not hold both positions at once. It must either stick to its statement that truth is a process in human experience, in which case the result is absurdity, as Professor James freely admits; or it must hold that truth is the condition or relation that makes verification possible. But if it keeps to the latter position, it is not different from the ordinary intellectualist view When this distinction is made, pragmatism as a theory of truth is seen to be either absurd or simply the theory we usually hold."

Professor G. B. Foster, of Chicago, speaking to the subject "Religion in the Making," laid down the proposition that religious faith springs from a fundamental human need, and its validity is determined by the manner in which it integrates itself in personal experience. The search for absolute truth ends ever in a blind wall, but a working definition of truth is possible of attainment by all. Religion, art, morality, came in just as the eye in physical development, in response to need, and the proof of a conception of truth is likewise realized by a biological rather than a logical process.

After the addresses of the afternoon a vesper service was conducted by Rev. Henry Wilder Foote, of Ann Arbor.

At the evening meeting, "The Church and Civic Righteousness" was the subject of addresses by three speakers, who in turn emphasized the individual, municipal and national aspects of the question. Rev. Florence Buck, of Kenosha, said that the church must strive to overcome the tendency of men to forget in the larger relations the good which they remember in private. Today good men are not invariably good citizens. It is a slow process to modify public opinion by modifying the life of individuals, yet this is the only certain way. Rev. F. V. Hawley, of Chicago, sharply differentiated the work of the state and the work of the church,

and thought that the church belittled itself when it undertook to do those things which the state can do much better. The reaction from an old theology with its gaze fastened upon a world to come has led to overmuch emphasis upon the world that now is. By stirring the souls of men to seek the higher life, the church is doing a greater service than if it should expend its energy in work of a political and social nature. Rev. R. W. Boynton, of Buffalo, described the work of the church in the United States as an influence for the making of good citizenship, the upholding of law and order, the begetting of true patriotism, the preserving of ideals in a commercial age, the development of fraternity and brotherhood, and the fostering of the spirit of peace among men.

The Sunday School meeting of Thursday morning was presided over by Rev. J. P. McCarthy, of Kalamazoo. Rev. Minot O. Simons, of Cleveland, presented a paper on "Making the Sunday School Worth While," and Rev. W. S. Nichols one on "The Progressive Sunday School." Mr. Simons believes in careful instruction in the Sunday School, because it is the one place where biblical and religious instruction can be given, and he favored a graded system, with paid teachers. He offered practical suggestions for the use of the opening exercises, and illustrated his own practice of giving a five-minute sermon at the close of the session. Mr. Nichols believes in the separation of church and school. The notion of the school as the feeder of the church should be done away, and the school should be made financially independent of the church. He favors a graded system of instruction, with tuition fees, formal graduation and paid teachers. He outlined a system of moral training whereby each child in the school should be considered as a "case," his equipment, needs and circumstances discovered, and proper treatment administered after conference with parents and consultation of authorities. An animated discussion followed, participated in by Messrs. Day, Rihbany, Boynton, Palmer, Dodson, and others.

At the young people's meeting in the afternoon, Rev. E. C. Smith, of Green Bay, spoke upon "The Young People's Society"; Rev. R. S. Loring, of Iowa City, upon "The Need of Doctrinal Instruction," and Rev. Edward Day, of Wichita, upon "Young People's Literary Clubs." Mr. Smith held that the young people should study subjects suitable to their grade, and should do some practical work. Mr. Loring maintained that a true attitude in the present was attainable only through a knowledge of the past, that one cannot remain detached religiously without danger, and that doctrinal instruction was necessary to a sane and balanced faith. Mr. Day urged the stimulation of the intellectual life of the young people by the systematic reading of current literature. Rev. Henry Wilder Foote presided at the meeting.

The annual banquet was held at the Palmer House Thursday evening. The toastmaster was Rev. A. M. Rihbany, of Toledo. Wit, humor and good fellowship were stimulated by the toastmaster, and responded to by an appreciative company. Rev. S. A. Eliot was heartily applauded as the brave and courageous standard-bearer of the liberal faith. After some humorous comments on the varieties of Unitarianism, he passed on to an appeal for greater co-operation with the central organization. Rev. J. H. Jones, of Topeka, sidetracked pleasantries for a time, while he spoke a word for the poor. Rev. Marion Murdoch thought it had been pragmatically proven that the conference was a success. With much witty comment, she drove home some of the lessons of the conference. Rev. F. A. Gilmore used his humor to urge upon laymen the duty of sustaining the church by the gift of themselves, their means and their children. The dignity of the work of the ministry was pressed upon parents considering the life work of their sons. Rev. J. H. Mueller spoke as an ardent Unitarian who had passed through a Billy Sunday revival with his heterodoxy as pronounced as ever. He strengthened his hearers to persevere in nonconformity by his lightsome treatment of opposition and difficulty. R. E. RAMSAY.

Treasurer's Report.

(Receipts.)

From churches		$1,820.01
From interest on invested funds		1,551.00
Secretary in field		847.50
Individuals		5.00
Basket collections		29.36
		$4,252.87

(Expenditures.)

Secretary's salary		$2,500.00
Secretary's traveling expenses		544.52
Office rent		720.00
Office expenses		180.51
Clerk's salary		300.00
Unity Publishing Committee—		
Expenses	$125.32	
Receipts	55.18	70.14
Expenses '07 Conference		45.50
		$4,360.67

Contributions from Churches.

Ann Arbor, Mich	20.00
Aurora, Ill	10.00
Bloomington, Ill	20.00
Brookings, S. D	11.00
Brooklyn, Mich	1.00
Buda, Ill	10.00
Burlington, Iowa	10.00
Champaign, Ill	10.00
Chicago—First	200.00
Unity	100.00
Third	50.00
All Souls'	25.00
Swedish	5.00

Cincinnati Ohio	30.00
Cleveland, Ohio	216.00
Colorado Springs, Colo	10.00
Davenport, Iowa	25.00
Decorah, Iowa	15.60
Denver, Colo	10.00
Des Moines, Iowa	15.00
Detroit, Mich	25.00
Duluth, Minn	10.00
Elkton, S. D	9.70
Evanston, Ill	15.00
Fort Collins, Colo	10.00
Geneseo, Ill	60.00
Geneva, Ill	10.00
Grand Haven, Mich	5.00
Grand Rapids, Mich., Holland	5.00
Greeley, Colo	10.00
Hanska, Minn	8.00
Harrietta, Mich	5.00
Hinsdale, Ill	25.00
Hobart, Ind	10.00
Humboldt, Iowa	10.00
Indianapolis, Ind	10.00
R. S. Loring for Iowa City	10.00
Jackson, Mich	1.88
Kalamazoo, Mich	10.00
Kansas City, Mo	24.50
Kenosha, Wis	20.00
Keokuk, Iowa	10.00
Lawrence, Kas	10.00
Madison, Wis	30.00
Marietta, Ohio	20.00
Milwaukee, Wis	105.53
Minneapolis—First	40.00
Free Christian	5.00
Moline, Ill	10.00
Mount Pleasant, Mich	10.00
Monroe, Wis	10.00
Omaha, Neb	25.00
Onsted, Mich	3.00
Perry, Iowa	5.00
Pipestone, Minn	10.00
Pueblo, Colo	10.00
Quincy, Ill	25.00
Rock Rapids, Iowa	5.00
Salem, Ohio	5.00
St. Cloud, Minn	4.75
St. Louis—Unity	100.00
Messiah	100.00
St. Paul, Minn	80.55
Serena, Ill	10.00
Sheffield, Ill	10.00
Shelbyville, Ill	4.00
Sherwood, Mich	6.00
Sioux City, Iowa	10.00
Streator, Ill	10.00
Toledo, Ohio	40.00
Topeka, Kas	8.30
Wichita, Kas	5.00
Winnipeg, Manitoba	5.00
	$1,820.01

Annual Members.

Mr. A. R. McAlpine, Chicago	$1.00
Miss Anna E. Shekell, Brooklyn, Mich	1.00
Mrs. Thos. J. Waterworth, Detroit, Mich	1.00
Mr. Lewis H. Williams, Waukegan, Ill	1.00
Mrs. Lewis H. Williams, Waukegan, Ill	1.00
	$5.00

In presenting these figures it is evident that the treasurer has not done his full duty. The directors and executive committee authorize expenditures and then leave it to the treasurer to provide the wherewithal, and this he has failed to do to the extent of about $150, and so feels that he has not earned his salary. It is, of course, very embarassing to have to report this, but he takes comfort in the fact that others have done their share, and were it not for the assistance of the secretary the discrepancy would have been much greater, but he, the secretary, turned in over $300 which he had collected in excess of his traveling expenses.

Upon reconsideration perhaps the treasurer can claim to have done his duty, as he has been able to earn $1,551 on the endowment fund of $30,000, which is over 5%, and this in view of existing conditions is quite a fair return on invested funds. If, then, the secretary has done his full duty and the treasurer has done his part, who has not? The only other source of revenue is "receipts from churches," so it was evident that it is there that the lapse is. In going over the figures submitted herewith it will be remarked how many even amounts, $10.00, $20.00, etc., there are, which might indicate that there has been sent in for support of our missionary work what could be spared and not all that could be raised, and this looks to me as though we have not the zeal to spread our gospel that we should have. Look at our brothers of other faiths and see the intenseness with which they strive to bring humanity to Jesus, why are we lacking in equal zeal to bring humanity to the truth as we see it? I do not feel qualified to tell our ministers how to preach and can only report my observations from the pew, and the thought has often occurred to me that if we were to make up our minds that the time had come to abandon the defensive and take up the aggressive side we could infuse enthusiasm into people that would awaken the missionary spirit so that we should be willing to do and to suffer to carry our gospel to the unbeliever. We spend too much time and energy in explaining and defending our position, and it needs no defense, it is a glory that we should insist upon imposing upon others and assert with all the force that is in us that ours is the only true faith.

What I have said perhaps does not pertain to the treasurer's report, but it is something I have been thinking of a good deal, and as this is the only time I am to have the floor I have taken this opportunity of saying it and trust it will be received with the assurance that my whole heart is in the work of the conference and that I am more than glad to do my small share of the work necessary to maintaining it.

Respectfully submitted,

H. W. Brough, Treas.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT CONFERENCE.

It is the belief of this Conference that the very existence of the Unitarian body depends on its success in developing courage and the habit of individual initiative in our congregations, schools and ministers.

We should inevitably become one of the numerous fossil sects of protestantism if we ceased to demand a keen and vital activity from all our members.

Material and numerical expansion can never take the place of rugged independence, loyalty to conviction and fearlessness in the demand for truth.

We believe that this spirit can thrive only under the purest form of democratic self-government and that therefore all denominational authority must be derived from and be controlled by, the representative vote of the churches.

We do not believe that the present organization of the American Unitarian Association adequately meets these needs and therefore suggest:—

First, The Western Conference hereby expresses its belief that the best interests of the American Unitarian Association will be served by the passage of an amendment to the by-laws of the Asssociation providing that life membership hereafter to be created shall be honorary in character.

Second, That the importance of being represented at the annual meeting of the Asssociation be urged upon the individual churches.

Third, That it would be well for churches asking advice as regards the settlement of a minister to apply to the Committee on Fellowship.

RESOLVED, That the method of procedure for the election of officers for the Western Conference in future be as follows:

That, in the fifth week preceding the annual meeting of the Conference there shall be sent to each society in the Conference a printed form showing plainly the kind, number and duration of offices to be filled, and the society be requested to make nominations to be received by the Board of Directors, until one week previous to the annual meeting of the Conference, the Board shall select for nomination to each office the two names having the largest number of votes, and these votes shall be arranged in order of number of votes received upon a printed ballot, under the respective offices for which the names have been so received and made, together with the statement showing the kind, number and duration of offices. This ballot shall be used by delegates in voting for officers at the annual meeting of the Conference—the largest number of votes to constitute an election in any instance.

Whereas, The meetings of the National Conference have been held in recent years upon the Atlantic seaboard, be it

RESOLVED, That the Western Conference invites the Council of the National Conference to consider the adoption of a plan by which the National Conference shall be held in rotation in New England, within the boundaries of the Middle States Conference and within the boundaries of the Western Conference.

Recognizing the need of closer connection and fuller cooperation between our churches, and believing that frequent and wider visitation from headquarters is a great help to this end, and realizing that the large territory of the W. U. C. makes it impossible even for so vigorous and faithful a secretary as we now have to visit the churches and investigate the field so much as is desirable, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That we recommend the Directors to seriously consider the appointment and support of a Field Agent to work in co-operation with the secretary in furthering the interests of the Denomination.

RESOLVED, That we appreciate the help given to our cause by the "Billings Lectureship" and that we heartily welcome the appointment of such lectures for the territory of the Western Unitarian Conference.

RESOLVED, That we commend and endorse the plan of the American Unitarian Association for the establishment of lay centers at various points where groups of liberals may be gathered, but are unable to form a church organization.

RESOLVED, That in the making of the program for the next Conference the time alloted each speaker be printed on the program and the chairman be instructed to rigidly enforce the time limit.

RESOLVED, That the Western Unitarian Conference express its appreciation of the generous hospitality of the First Unitarian Society of Chicago, and its gratitude for the ample provision made for the pleasure and comfort of the delegates.

RESOLVED, That the Conference accept the kind invitation of the St. Paul Church to hold its next meeting in St. Paul.

RESOLVED, That the Directors be instructed to make provision on the Conference program for a more extended consideration of any business that may be presented for the action of the Conference.

Believing that the WESTERN CONFERENCE NEWS LETTER is a valuable aid in the work of the Conference, we hereby commend its publication and suggest that our ministers aid the circulation of the paper by urging a more general personal subscription to the WESTERN CONFERENCE NEWS LETTER.

RESOLVED, That this Conference extend to Rev. and Mrs. Cantrell its most sincere sympathy in their recent great sorrow.

Additional resolution, on motion of Mr. Hull, voting thanks of Conference to Treasurer Brough for his services.

Officers Elected.

President—HON. MORTON D. HULL, Chicago, Ill.
Vice-Presidents—
REV. GEORGE A. THAYER, Cincinnati, Ohio.
MR. CHARLES W. AMES, St. Paul, Minn.
Secretary—REV. WILSON M. BACKUS, Chicago.
Treasurer—MR. HERBERT W. BROUGH, Chicago.
Directors to May, 1911—Mr. F. F. Temple, Hinsdale, Ill.; Rev. W. Hanson Pulsford, Chicago; Rev. Fred V. Hawley, Chicago; Mr. C. S. Udell, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Hon. Morton D. Hull, Chicago; Mr. Edwin C. Mason, Milwaukee, Wis.; Rev. George R. Gebauer, Duluth, Minn.

Chicago.—The Conference Directors met at 4 p. m., Monday, May 18th. Present: Messrs. Hull, Bennett, Wilder, Simons, Backus, Hawley, Mason, Brough, Mrs. Delano and Miss Buck. The report of the treasurer was read and accepted. The report of the secretary was read and correction made. The secretary was authorized to engage one hundred plates for the banquet at the Palmer House. The manner of presenting the resolutions to the Conference that had gone through the Board was discussed. On motion of Mr. Hawley, seconded by Mr. Wilder, the secretary was instructed to present them. On motion a slight change was made in the resolution regarding the method of nomination. The change was in the order of candidates' position on ballot being determined by the number of votes received instead of alphabetically. The meeting then adjourned.

ALLIANCE NOTES.

Following the public meeting of the National Alliance Board at the Church of the Messiah, Chicgo, May 19th, luncheon was served to 120 Alliance members at the Lexington Hotel. This proved the usual pleasant social feature of Alliance Day. At the close of the luncheon Mrs. Jarvis, who presided, spoke of the need of a wide sense of fellowship with the world outside our own circle. She then introduced Mrs. Child of Minnesota, who told of the swelling tide of commerce sweeping through the northwest and of the future need of strong, uplifting moral influences for these rapidly increasing numbers. The liberal churches and the Alliances of Minnesota are making ready for this time. Mrs. Longley brought greetings from the south and told of the difficulties across the path of Unitarians there. The enthusiastic and energetic Alliance of Atlanta finally won approval by the able assistance rendered certain philanthropies. Mrs. Bradley of Cleveland suggested the appointment of a committee to arrange for making this Alliance Day an annual affair. Miss Low, who was accorded a warm reception, gave an instance of personal interest in Unitarianism and Alliance work on the part of a

southern woman when visiting New York and urged that this example be followed by attendance at the local church when traveling or on our summer outing.

At two o'clock the Alliance members reassembled at the church and listened to a very enjoyable organ recital given by Mrs. Mueller of Bloomington. The meeting of the afternoon, presided over by Mrs. Delano, was opened at half past two with the hymn, "Awake, My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve." After the invocation, given by Rev. Miss Buck, Mrs. Grant Beebe made a brief address of welcome. Miss Low, fresh from the meeting of the Rocky Mountain Conference and the newly formed Rocky Mountain Associate Alliance, spoke of the sense of fellowship which unites all our widely scattered Branches and the common aim, to further the work and value of our church.

Rev. Miss Murdoch gave the address of the afternoon, her subject, "The Hopers and Workers." It was a strong and stirring answer in behalf of optimism to the question, Is the world improving? Both individual spiritual growth and better material conditions mark the advance and are the methods by which it is brought about. Though at any time these signs may seem to be lacking, there is wisdom in such faith as that of John of the Apoclypse, who, in the dark days of Nero, saw the bright vision of the future, "a new heaven and a new earth." This faith and the belief of the Stoics that high ideals would some time rule the world, found a measure of fulfillment in the century of Trojan and Marcus Aurelius, whose beneficent influence extends to our own time. No doubt gloom and despair overtook many a pagan heart as the ancient faith went down, and what was the Roman to think when he saw the empire giving way before the barbarians? But wonderful days of a later time justified those who would hope and believe.

Rapid changes often take place after long periods of slow growth, during which the quiet, persistent prophets and workers, though ignorant of the outcome, faithfully strive to make their corner of the earth reflect the highest ideals they know. Sociology has come rapidly to the front and is holding the attention today as do few other subjects. This study of the conditions and needs of men is calling to its aid the understanding heart. Its prophets and workers look to an economic readjustment in the not far distant future, saying that poverty may be done away with and the "three I's, Ignorance, Indifference and Injustice," disappear. The awakening public conscience is another hopeful sign of the times. One example is its approval of John Hay's introduction of the golden rule into international affairs, against all political traditions. Most marked is the change in the religious world, its emphasis on the ethical side, its intellectual freedom. "The mental cloud which has overhung the world since the first thunderstorm, is lifting. The specters of a stricken imagination are passing away." The Modernist movement in the Roman church, Campbell stiring the conservatives of England are but two of the many indications of the broadening thought, though very significant ones. In this forward movement liberals must not let it be said as by Henry V to a laggard, "We conquered at Aix and you were not there." In the belief that Jesus taught no system but an ideal to be embodied in noble living, all Unitarians find a bond of fellowship. This fellowship is enlarging; the things that separate are giving way, and will, before the spirit of fraternity "until all the hopers and workers of the world will be marching together, men and women, black and white, all welcomed in proportion to their power of soul."

The rise of Christian Science bears some relations to the grade of intellectual activity in our churches and to woman's small share in the weightier church matters. Here are Alliance opportunities. As both hopers and workers, the Alliance women, their energies combined and animated with zeal and tolerance, may fight a good fight with evil and do much to hasten in the new day.

The discussion was led by Rev. Celia Parker Woolley, who deplored the tendency to emphasize points of difference in discussion, necessary and admirable as it was at times. "Fellowship" is the watchword today and we should seek to find where we may agree. To bridge a chasm is the aim of all these social movements, the Social Settlements, the labor agitation. The woman question and the race problem each implies a chasm to be bridged. This cannot be done until each class is allowed to speak for itself. When we learn to interpret each other more justly, to make more kindly judgments, then shall we know better how to help each other.

Others who took part in the discussion or gave Alliance reports were Rev. Mr. Jones of Topeka, Rev. Mr. McCarthy of Kalamazoo, Mrs. Fiske and Mrs. Mueller of Bloomington, Mrs. E. C. Smith of Green Bay, and Miss Low. According to the roll-call there were present representatives from 11 states and 28 branches.

MARION M. LEWIS.

Missouri Valley (South) Associate Alliance.—The spring meeting was held Friday, April 24, at Topeka. In the absence of the president, Mrs. J. D. Stevens, Mrs. W. C. Root, president of the Kansas City branch, presided. Lawrence had 16 delegates in attendance, Kansas City 2, St. Joseph sent a

letter of greeting, Topeka 20. The next meeting is to be held in Lawrence. The meeting was unusually interesting and full of earnestness. The program gave many new thoughts that will be helpful in church work. The program comprised a devotional service, conducted by Rev. J. H. Jones; reports from the officers and branches, a paper, "Women in Religion," by Miss Marie Goodman, with discussion by Mrs. Ferguson and Mrs. Bennett; a paper, "A Sunday School Problem," by Mrs. Alfred Whitman, discussion by Miss Barclay and Miss Goodman; a paper, "Where I Find Liberal Religion," by Dr. D. K. Longshore, discussion by Miss Brown and Miss Morgan. A luncheon was served at noon by the women of the Topeka church. This, with the social hour, was much enjoyed. The election of officers resulted in the choice of Mrs. O. E. Leonard, of Lawrence, for president.

BELLE K. LINDLEY, Sec'y.

The Chicago Associate Alliance held its fifth meeting in Hinsdale, Ill., on May 7th at the hospitable home of Mrs. C. W. Melcher.

Meeting called to order at 11:15, Mrs. Grant Beebe presiding. Minutes of previous meeting read and approved, also report of treasurer. Miss Le Baron was appointed to represent the Associate Alliance at the meeting to be held in Boston on May 26th. An interesting letter was read from Mrs. Ernest C. Smith, of Green Bay, Wis., stating an Alliance had been formed there, and motion was made that greetings be sent to this new branch and to thank Mrs. Smith for her interest in bringing this about.

The Nominating Committee was appointed, comprising one member from each of the seven branches. Mrs. Delano gave an interesting report of her trip to N. Y. to the National Board Meeting April 10th.

It was voted to send a cheering letter to the church in Hudson, Wis.

Reference was made to the coming Conference to be held in Chicago, May 18-21, and to the Alliance luncheon at the Lexington Hotel, Tuesday, May 19th.

Mrs. W. H. Freeman gave the report of the Religious News for the past year, referring to the Paragraph Pulpit, International Council, Unitarian Service Pension, and many other topics of interest in the religious world. Mr. Hawley is to attend the May meetings in Boston, and a request was made that he give a report of same at Annual meeting in June, which he kindly consented to do. A fine and carefully written paper was given by Mr. J. M. A. Spence, of Hinsdale, on "The Evolution of Love." A discussion followed. The next and last meeting for the year takes place in Geneva on Thursday, June 4th, when reports from all the branches will be given, also reports of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, and Postoffice Mission Committees, and the election of officers for the coming year.

No further business. Adourned for luncheon and the social hour.

EMMA C. BAKER, Sec'y.

AMONG THE CHURCHES

Fort Collins.—An extra session of the Rocky Mountain Conference was held in Fort Collins, Colorado, on May 13th and 14th. The carefully arranged detail and the generous hospitality of the entertaining parish were fruitful of a convening of the Unitarians of Colorado long to be remembered by all who were so fortunate as to be present. Too much could not be said of the program, but space forbids writing of each address. It is better in these columns to report the conference as a whole. The spirit of happy comradeship which was whole-souled in the early handshakes, increased from hour to hour and expanded until the parting hour, and broke forth into the stirring strains of Auld Lang Syne.

Throughout the addresses and the discussion the idea of a forward movement repeatedly came to the fore. The questions raised were deep and searching. These questions were met with unflinching optimism and with practical suggestions. The results of the Conference are almost sure to be seen in the work done in the churches in the near future. All present felt the stir to work together for Unitarianism, not merely to uphold the banner, but to carry it forward into new fields and toward new opportunities. This Conference was an almost perfect model of what all Conferences should strive to be. It was a revival in the best sense and individuals and churches felt born again to renewed effort and loyalty.

Brookings, S. D.—Under the direction of the minister of this society, Rev. Rett E. Olmstead, a series of meetings were held March 22-25. Mr. Olmstead preached Sunday, Mr. Backus Monday, Mr. Hodgin Tuesday and Mr. Patterson Wednesday. The attendance filled the G. A. R. hall. Many of the students and teachers from the State College attended. All of the ministers also conducted devotional services at the college chapel.

Elkton, S. D.—Through the efforts of Rev. Rett E. Olmstead a group of liberal people has been gathered in this place. Mr. Olmstead visits them

once a month. Recently Mr. Hodgin and Mr. Backus visited Elkton and spoke to an audience which, though small in number, is "our kind."

Wichita, Kan.—The new minister, Rev. Edward Day, is giving a series of sermons on "Our Liberal Faith." He is finding much opportunity for outside work, preaching at Waco and other places near Wichita. Mr. Day has brought his New England energy to bear upon Kansas problems with good results.

Streator, Ill.—A remarkable occurrence took place in the Church of Good Will on a recent Sunday. The speaker for the evening service missed his train. The audience gathered and waited long for him, but he did not come. The president of the society noticed the minister of the local Episcopal church in the audience and asked him to speak. In the course of his remarks, which were brief and informal, he confessed to coming to Streator with a dislike for liberalism and acknowledged that he had bitterly fought it, but that now, with better knowledge, he found in it a friend where he had feared a foe. It is common for those who have left the old for the new to state their conversion, but it is significant for one who still remains with the old to speak so openly. President Williams, of the Good Will church writes as follows regarding the incident: "Perhaps nothing so significant of the changed attitude of religion has happened in Streator as the remarkable address of Rev. Higbee in the Good Will church last Sunday evening. Such an apparent coming together of age-wide opposing movements could hardly have been imagined. On the one hand was one of the oldest Christian churches, reaching back through apostolic succession to the foundation of Christianity; on the other hand, the newest of the radical Protestant movements, running back scarce half a generation. It was not more remarkable that the minister of the Episcopal church should declare that there is a fundamental substratum of unity underlying both these movements than that the members of the Church of Good Will should applaud and approve such a sentiment. For the antagonism of the radical church toward the doctrinal dogmatism of the old theology has not been less marked than the condemnation of its heresies by the conservatives. The conflict was open; the division was wide. All the more remarkable, therefore, the discovery on both sides that there existed a bond of union deeper than all differences, a unity openly declared by the authorized representative of the old church and applauded by the new."

Field Notes.—The secretary made no report in these columns last month because, when the paper went to press he was several hundred miles away. During the month of March he preached every Sunday in some one of our churches until the fourth Sunday, when, after preaching in the morning at Chicago, he took an afternoon train for Brookings, S. D. Rev. Rett E. Olmstead, who has been working in Brookings for a year with most excellent success, had arranged for a series of meetings, for which he secured the aid of Rev. E. Stanton Hodgin, of Minneapolis; Rev. Geo. R. Patterson, Universalist, of Rochester, Minn., and the secretary. The secretary preached Monday evening in the G. A. R. hall. Tuesday he spoke before the students and faculty of the college, and Wednesday evening he conducted the services connected with Mr. Patterson's sermon. Thursday he preached at Elkton, S. D., where Mr. Hodgin had preached the night before. From here he went to Pipestone, Minn., to speak Friday night, Messrs. Hodgin and Patterson having spoken the night before. Sunday the secretary preached twice in Pipestone to good audiences. The movement at Elkton is new but promising. The one at Pipestone has amply borne out the promise of growth which it make at its beginning a year ago. From Pipestone the secretary went to Luverne, where he called upon the friends of the cause. He went Monday evening to Rock Rapids, where he preached. Tuesday was spent in meeting the Rock Rapids people. Wednesday found him at Sioux City, where he attended the annual meeting of Unity Church. Thursday was spent in travel, and Friday with Mr. Mann in Omaha. Here the secretary had the pleasure of being one of an audience that filled the auditorium of the church Friday evening to hear Mr. Mann lecture on Locker-Lamson. Saturday evening he attended a business meeting of the Lincoln society. Sunday he preached in Lincoln. Monday he traveled, reaching Decorah, Iowa, Tuesday noon. He preached there Tuesday evening and attended a business meeting of the church. Wednesday night found him back in Chicago, and Thursday morning at his desk. The second and fourth Sundays were spent with the Third Church, Chicago, the third at Serena.

The above was not published, though in type, last month, because of lack of space. The secretary will add to it his journeyings in May. The first Sunday was spent at Milwaukee, the second at Hobart, Ind., the third at Evanston, the fourth at Hingham, Mass., and the fifth at the Third Church, Chicago. During this month he attended the Western Conference in Chicago, the Anniversary Week meetings and the meeting of the National Fellowship Committee in Boston.

THE CHURCH OF TODAY.*.

Dr. Crooker's new book has been loudly heralded by the publishers and warmly praised by many of those who are doing the practical work of our churches. It is an enterprise that greatly commends itself—to offer a plea for the church in a day when to many the church seems falling into neglect. The plea here made is eloquent, earnest and effective; effective, at least, in strengthening the convictions of those who are already convinced. The difficulty, of which the author is not insensible, is to get a hearing for the church from those who do not believe in its claims. We have purposely read the book with such skeptical persons in mind, and our principal query in laying it down is as to whether it is calculated to convince them of the lack in their lives due to non-participation in those benefits of the church which Dr. Crooker so warmly and persuasively urges upon his readers. We wish that his book might go into the hands of those skeptics who need it most.

The book is published simultaneously by the Unitarian, Universalist and Congregational publishing houses, an arrangement which commends it at the outset to a somewhat large constituency. It is beautifully printed and bound, and is sold at a very moderate price. All of these circumstances will make for its wide circulation. It contains eleven brief chapters, the titles of which are felicitous and suggestive. We are first asked to consider the problem of the church's existence as an institution, then led on to an elaboration of the statement that in our time religion grows, while the church declines; next certain assumed obstacles in the way of the church are enumerated, and the present situation, in the mind of the author decidedly unfavorable to the church, is depicted. In the following chapter there is a strong presentation of religion as a corporate life, to us much the most effective writing in the book. Next come chapters on what creates the church and what the church contributes, followed by illustrations of the church's value to individuals and to society, a plea that the church is more needed than ever, a defense against the familiar argument that there are sinners inside the church and saints outside, and finally the church is inspiringly presented as the organ through which the spirit and influence of Jesus may best be kept alive in the world.

With very much that Dr. Crooker has to say we are in hearty agreement, while the manner of its expression is in a high degree stimulating and delightful. Perhaps the chief ground for a certain dissatisfaction which the book has left in our mind is that we cannot see the situation entirely through Dr. Crooker's eyes. His point of view seems to us static rather than dynamic. We think that he grants too much comfort to the enemy. He is earnest in deprecating a blind optimism regarding the present position and prospects of the church, and in this we fully assent to what he says. But some of his main contentions appear to us not to correspond with existing facts. The reason for this may be that the facts themselves are exceedingly hard to determine. Is it true, for example, that while religion is growing in the world, the church is steadily declining? It is, of course, rhetorically effective to make such a statement and on it he makes a fervent appeal to rally around the sinking church. But we are convinced that inspiration does not come that way. We need, as Emerson said, to keep the victorious tone. It is this tone that we somewhat miss from the book before us. We cannot readily believe that "the church is today facing the most serious crisis in its history" (p. 66), and nothing that is here alleged goes any distance to convince us that this is in accord with the actual state of the case.

Not a few of Dr. Crooker's statements, indeed, representing his personal judgment on highly complex matters, might be turned squarely around by another equally eloquent writer, and urged with scarcely less effectiveness. Because of this, the book does not, to our thinking, escape at times a tone of unreality. This is doubtless increased by the vagueness of many of the expressions used. To cite one example of many, we are told, in a passage deprecating worship out of doors, as compared with the fuller worship of the church, that "a walk through a forest will not lift and chasten a soul like a church service." That depends! We agree with the main contention, that the church can, on the whole, give more than nature alone. But *some* walks through a forest, compared with *some* wooden and lifeless church services, are a very benediction from the Most High Himself, as against the mummeries of blind and stupid men, who know Him not!

A radical complaint might be that Dr. Crooker does not anywhere clearly tell us what he means by the church. The word covers a tremendous scope of meaning, from the august strength of the Roman Catholic church, scarcely touched by the disintegrating forces of the time, to the strange attracting power of a multitude of new occult re-

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*The Church of Today, a Plea, by Joseph Henry Crooker, Boston, American Unitarian Association. Pp. 177, 75 cents net; by mail, 82 cents.

ligions, or old superstitions surviving in manifold guise on into what we carelessly assume to be a rational and enlightened age. The church, as a broad, general idea, has exerted a wonderful charm over many strong intelligences. But the church as a collection of concrete realities is too diverse in character to be lumped together wholesale and discoursed about as a unit. Nevertheless, the book in this respect may be taken as a symptom of what is going on under many disguises in the religious world. All churches, as they grow older and stronger, tend to conform to one broad historic type. They borrow fom each other the best features that have developed under varying conditions, and each gradually evolves organs of assimilation and protection by which to succeed in the struggle for existence. Dr. Crooker depicts for us the church in this broad sense striving to succeed in a hostile world. Yet the world is no more hostile to it than to other organisms that would survive. All must conform to types that have proven their capacity to endure. Thus we have generated among ourselves a kind of High Church Unitarianism, whose growth in late years has been the most striking phase of our special movement. This phase the book before us, with its strongly ecclesiastical tone, well represents. There is undoubted loss here, as well as gain. But to our thinking the churches are fully capable of adaptation to changes in their environment, and the changes that are in progress in their organization are merely incidental to health and survival.

It is our belief that, looked at from the evolutionary point of view, every existing form of the church gains its right to exist by ministering, as Dr. Crooker splendidly urges, to some form of human need. We believe that every church is as well supported by the humanity around it as its work deserves. We believe that in the past most churches have grievously misread and abused human nature, and that many are doing so still. We believe that the churches, like other institutions composed of human beings, are nevertheless gifted with an unlimited ability for learning by experience, and that out of much sad and distressing weakness and incapacity they are all finding the safe and sane way in which to walk and serve their day and generation. We believe finally that Dr. Crooker's book, by the large amount of wisdom and insight that it contains, will do much to point the way among ourselves to a higher and more efficient type of church.

RICHARD W. BOYNTON.

Buffalo, N. Y.